

Vol. 1– January 2018

HEIRS

Harrow Early Immigrant Research Society

newsletter



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Community Centre (Arena Bldg.)



Next meeting...

The Role of Blacks in Canada's Military History

Newsletter News!

Welcome to the January newsletter.

We assume and hope that our members had a joyous holiday season, and enjoyed the end of 2017 with its customary toast and good wishes for all in 2018.

We have interesting and informative meetings planned for this year at HEIRS, and hope more of our members increase their activity within the group, even if only by reaching out with genealogical questions, to help discover even more about their ancestors.

Our meeting recaps hardly scratch into the information and imagery provided at each meeting by our guest speakers. To benefit the most, come out when, and if you can. **See you there?**

Next Meeting

When: Thursday, January 25, 1:30 PM

Where: Harrow-Colchester Arena Community Meeting Room

The Role of Blacks in Canada's Military History

Milo Johnson will be looking at the contributions during the 2 World Wars provided by Canada's black community.

The impact of blacks has not been properly recognized for what they did. Some of our best meetings have been those that tell these 'forgotten stories', and our first meeting of the year should again be another enlightening one.

You will learn some new things and perhaps have some beliefs challenged too. Facts can be downright amazing!



David Daniel Johnson, circa 1943

Thursday, November 23 saw HEIRS members gathered for the final meeting of 2017

Our guest speakers were Jean Forsberg and Cris Kohl, well-known underwater archaeologists who have made hundreds of dives around the world to locate and explore shipwrecks.

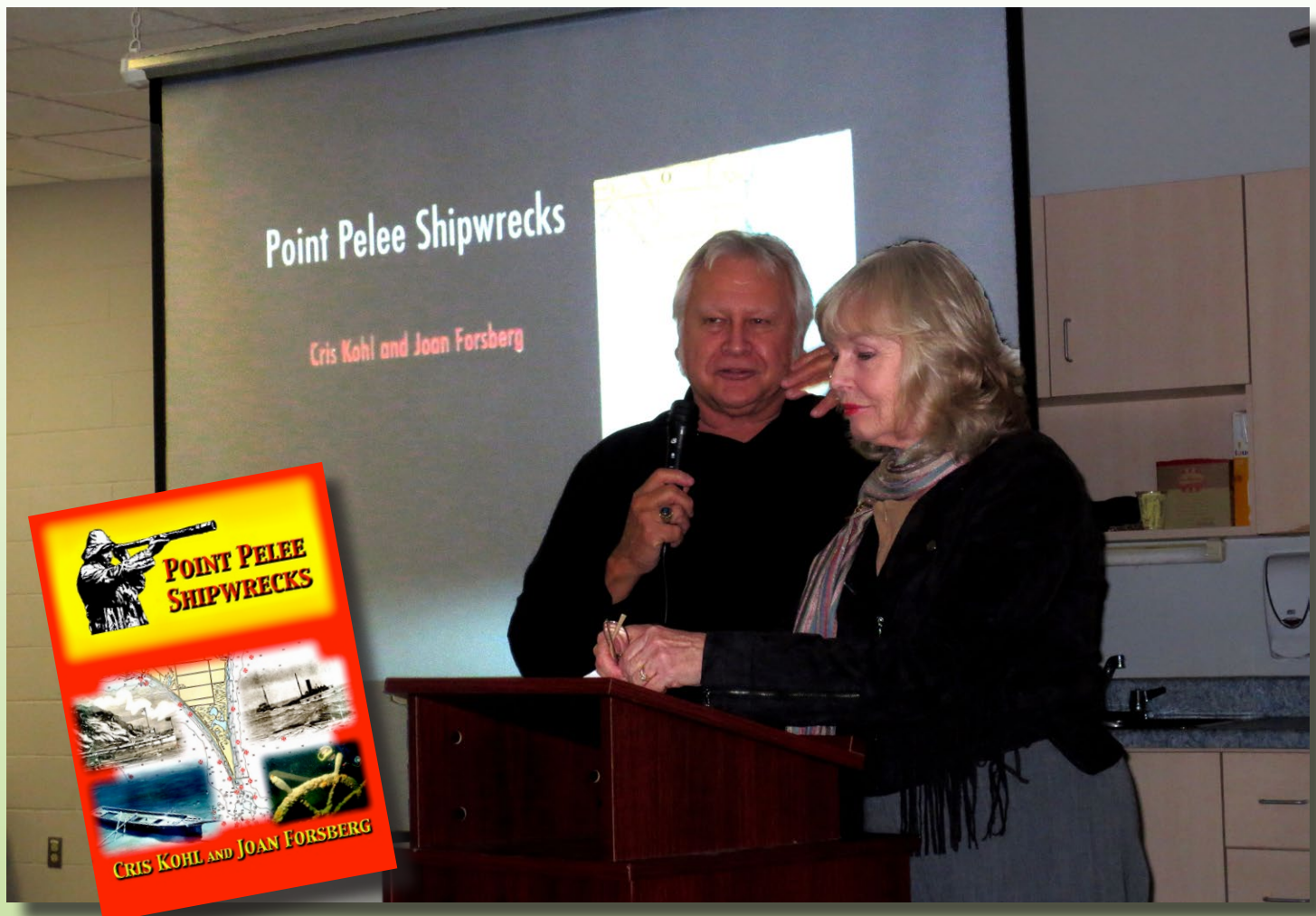
They presented "Shipwrecks of Point Pelee", a look at a few of the 100 plus wrecks in this area, caused by a combination of shallow shoals and sudden violent storms due to Lake Erie's relatively shallow waters.

The video presentation included photos of vessels as they were at their glory, and then news clippings of the day, telling of heroic actions, as well as tragic fatalities.

Intriguing video footage of various divers (including Joan and Cris) examining the wrecks on the lake bottom were fascinating. The stories of illegal salvaging and occasional removal of artifacts by other divers over the years was informative.

We also learned that due to the fresh water, cold temperatures and relatively shallow depths, our own Great Lakes contain the best preserved shipwrecks anywhere in the world, allowing us to learn so much about the "age of wooden ships".

Now if Cris and Joan can only locate that elusive 'Griffon'!



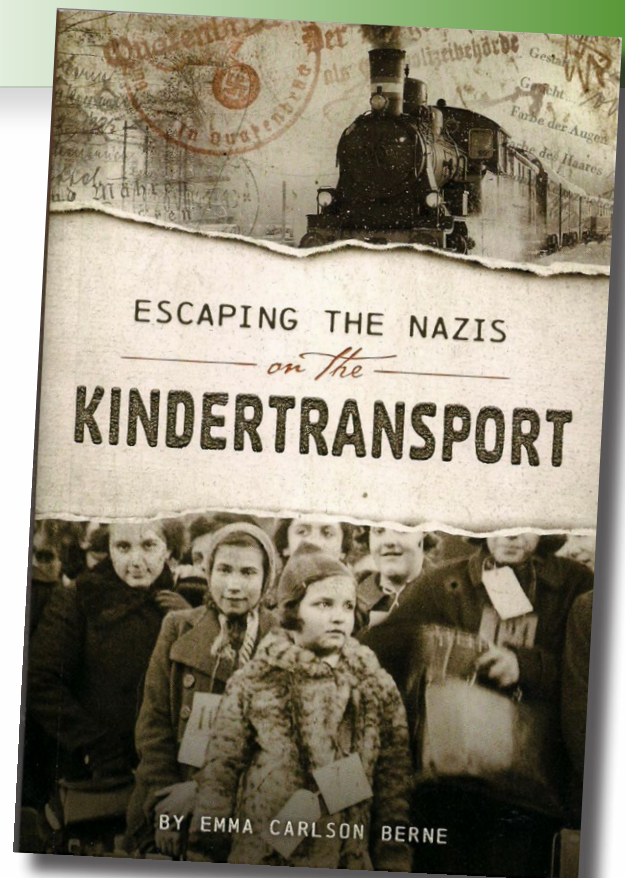
Escaping the Nazis on the Kindertransport

-by Emma Carlson Berne

By the mid 1930s, it was obvious to the world that an organized program to eliminate Jews was under way in Nazi-controlled countries of Europe. Borders were closed so that no adults Jews could leave, but it was possible to get their children out.

A system of gathering Jewish children and getting them out of danger by loading them on train cars and departing for safe havens was set up, with Nazi acceptance. Parents brought their children to the trains, knowing they would never see them again, but that they would at least have a future far away.

These trains, called kindertransport, left Austria, Germany and Czechoslovakia, heading for the Netherlands; the children then travelled by ship to Harwich, England.

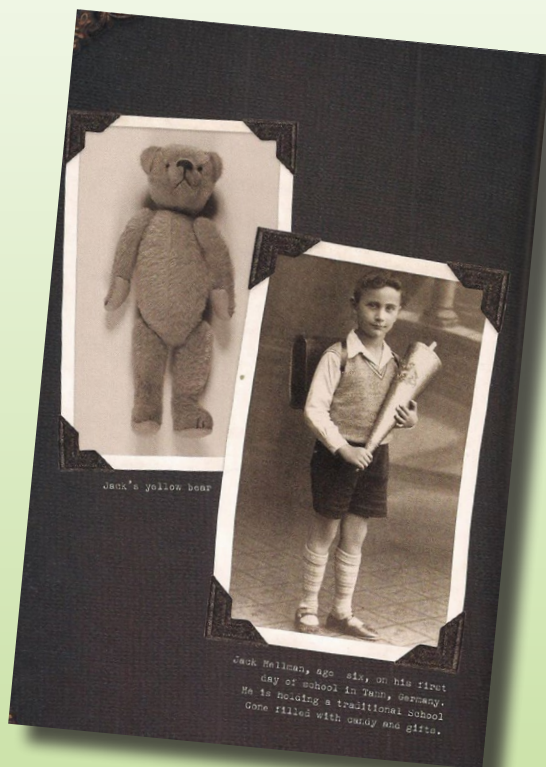


In all, about 10,000 children were saved, brought to a new land with a new language and no family. They came with a few family photos and scattered memories, perhaps a favourite doll or stuffed animal, as many were only 5 or 6 years old.

This paperbound book of 96 pages tells the stories of 7 of the children who got out and survived. Their stories reveal the terrible times they lived through, the hardships of re-settling and being totally dependent on strangers, and the eventual realization that their parents and family members were no more.

Most pages are in their words, reprints from a diary, or poems they wrote to express deep feelings- a very personal glimpse into lives filled with tragedy early, but eventual success and even prosperity as adults. It is a reminder that a few brave individuals were able to do great things in the midst of madness.

You will find this book in the lending library at HEIRS, where members need only to sign it out.



Special Visitor at HEIRS

On Thursday and Friday, November 16th & 17th, HEIRS was visited by noted author Jean Rae Baxter, who has written a series of books on the difficulties experienced by the United Empire Loyalists as they began rebuilding their lives in Upper Canada following the American Revolution.

She was researching her own roots which included Fox, McCormick and others, while also gathering information on the 1838 battle of Pelee Island, which will form the nucleus of her next book.

Her weekend also included speaking at the UEL meeting on Saturday, November 18th and a guided tour of the Boblo Blockhouse the following Monday.

She was very appreciative of the materials she found, and expects to return again when the sunny Spring weather will allow.

During the UEL meeting, HEIRS Director Ted Steele and his wife Susan met Mildred White Adams. Mildred's maternal grandmother was the woman who kept the White family Bible, that HEIRS was able to reunite with the family.

Both Mildred and HEIRS are delighted with the happy ending to that story!



L to R: Mildred Adams, Jean Rae Baker, Susan and Ted Steele

Upcoming Event

The Leamington Mersea Historical Society will again be part of the Essex Train Show, to be held at the Essex Public School at 71 Brien Avenue East, on Saturday and Sunday, February 24 and 25.

The show runs from 9 AM to 4 PM, and offers a display of historical photos of Leamington, as well as the MCR train station, and a multitude of books and articles for sale.

**Anyone with an interest in
“the good old days”
will enjoy this show.**



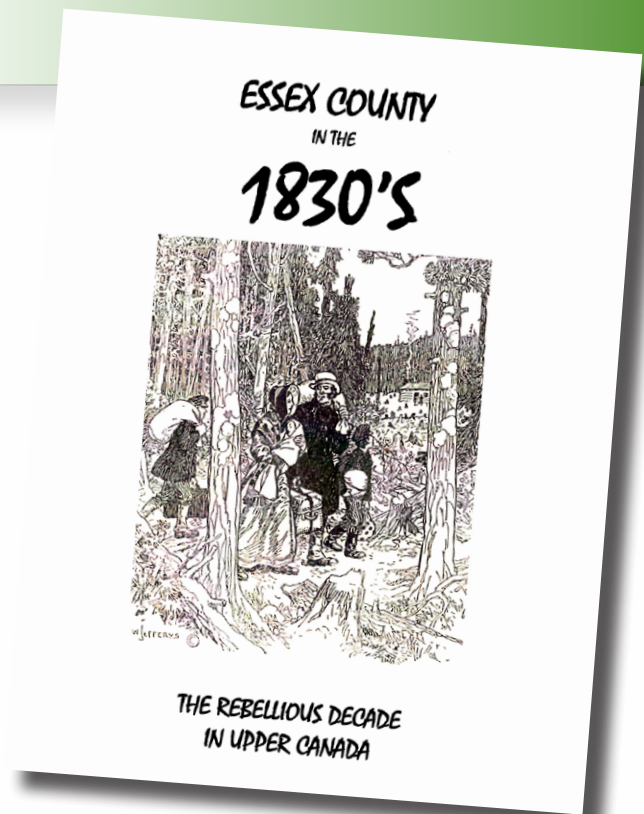
6 Book Review

The HEIRS Research Centre was visited recently by author Jean Rae Baxter, who was the featured speaker at the United Empire Loyalists meeting on November 18th, last Fall.

Jean has roots in this area, and also wanted to research information for her next book, her sixth, about Pelee Island and the Rebellions of 1837. To assist her, we of course located files and books that would be of interest. I found this book on the shelves which was written by HEIRS Director Chris Carter and David Dicaire.

This is a soft cover book, approximately 8 x 11 inches in size. It is an exceptional look back at the way people lived their daily lives here - beginning with the various modes of travel, from stagecoaches to sleds in winter, and discusses the inns and taverns which offered rest and hospitality.

Many photos of long gone inns are shown, with their locations pinpointed to give a clearer picture of the early landscape. The difficulties of travel, photos of some who made their living in the transporting of goods & passengers, plus maps of the county illustrating what few roads there were at that time, make for very interesting reading, & reminders about the hated "toll roads" when sleds ran through without paying the fee that bring a laugh even today.



The second part of the book moves on to a larger view of a big problem of the day- "The Family Compact", an elite circle of power brokers of the day, who had all the legal and political power, and were responsible to nobody but themselves. The discontent this engendered is developed & explained, becoming a leading factor in the rise of armed rebellion in 1837 in both Upper and Lower Canada.

Sections follow with great information on the rebellions, especially the Battle of Pelee Island, Battle of Windsor, of Fighting Island & Amherstburg. Again, reproductions of newspaper clippings from the time add much to the telling, as do the photos & drawings.

The print is large, easy to read, & not in the style of a textbook at all. It's an enjoyable read and provides further understanding of these events & the people who lived them.

The 308-page book with many photos, maps & illustrations is available from the HEIRS library for \$25. Check it out at our next meeting on Thursday, January 25 .

The Amherstburg Echo.

THE ORIGINAL PAPER OF THE DISTRICT

Tue. Dec. 11

AMHERSTBURG, ONTARIO, FRIDAY, JANUARY 11, 1901.

Week No. 2474

100 ACRES FOR SALE.

In full possession, Amherst Township, about 100 acres of land, with a small building. For further particulars see page 10.

FALLS BROS., Agts.
Amherstburg.

LIME FOR SALE
IN
CARLOAD LOTS.

THE SOVEREIGN BANK OF CANADA.

HEAD OFFICE, TORONTO, ONT.

SAVINGS BANK DEPARTMENT.

BARROW BRANCH, AMHERSTBURG BRANCH.
C. A. WAGNATION, M. J. LAKE
Managers.

PROCESSED AND PRESERVED

As to the quality of the goods, they are guaranteed to be of the highest quality, and are sold at a very low price. The goods are sold in large quantities, and are suitable for all purposes.

INCORPORATED IN CANADA

The goods are sold in large quantities, and are suitable for all purposes. The goods are sold at a very low price, and are of the highest quality.

BURK BROS.



January 11

The Agriculture short course opened in the rooms over Darby's Drug Store (Aldrich block) with a class of '21.

The old butcher shop adjoining G. Arner's was moved to Hillsville and made into a residence.

Attractive growing season proposition: cucumbers \$1.50 per cwt. With no sorting, or 75 cents per bushel for all sorts, big, little and crooks. Tomato growing at 50 cents per bushel for ripe and unripe tomatoes.

Clark & Co. is developing its extensive interests. Mr. Chisholm will be a resident inspector.

Andrew Wilson, son of John Wilson, who went overseas with his regiment from Rosetown, Saskatchewan, reports that he went through the hot artillery firing of Passchendaele, France, without injury but does not wish to go through it again. Leslie Quick, son of G. W. Quick of Maple Creek, Saskatchewan, who has many relatives here, was also a survivor of the awful battle of Passchendaele.

Charles Garrett of Vancouver, B. C., who spent his boyhood days here, was renewing acquaintances having been here at St. Thomas visiting his mother, Mrs. I. J. Thompson. He is engaged in the timber business in B.C. and has helped to get out many million feet of spruce for airplanes.

George Byron has died. Born in Quebec, came here at an early age to Gosfield South. He spent his early life at the home of Wm. G. Fox.

When he branched out into farming, he moved to Colchester South and married Ida Snider, daughter of Jos. Snider, and had one son, Orie, of Chicago. He then married Fannie Snider, daughter of Daniel Snider; three sons, Kenneth, of Detroit, Ernest and Ainslie.

January 18

Trend in grocery delivery to eliminate extra costs of charging them; move to cash and carry, with self-service in the stores, named 'groceries', and ready packaging.

The Treasures of HEIRS ...

- by Ted Steele, HEIRS Director

My “job” with HEIRS is fascinating, which means it is a “labour of love” rather than a job. I get to create these monthly newsletters and also gain access to the most intriguing items and stories you could imagine.

About 18 months ago, we acquired a large pile of scrapbook pages kept during the years of WW 2, and they included all sorts of entries. Some were of the war, of course, while others told of the royal family, local events and all manner of things. One page was an interview with 2 of the last stagecoach drivers of Essex County, Mr. Fox and Mr. Wigle. What follows is an abridged version of their stories, a great document in itself, but even more so because of the many HEIRS members related to the two gentlemen.

Stage Coaching! An old fashioned system of transportation of many years ago made famous in song and story, in the opinion of many in the younger generation. That is the younger generation for you, always classifying anything from before their time as antique.

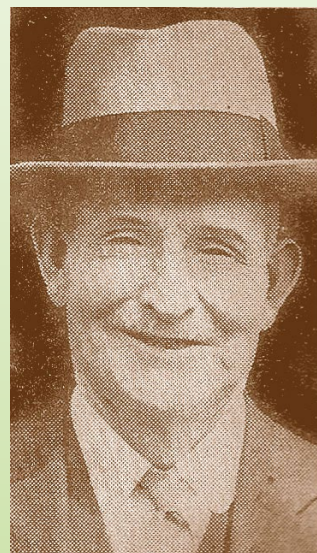
Stage coaching, particularly in the Essex Peninsula, was a decided advantage of the early years of the 20th century. Windsor alone has two of the most famous stage coach drivers as modern residents. They are William Fox, of 586 Dougall Avenue, and Gordon Wigle, of Victoria Avenue.

It was back in 1884 that Mr. Fox began “stage coaching”, working for his brother Albert Fox, who owned the stage line from Amherstburg to Oxley, “out the turnpike road”.

The first stop on this route was at Dupuis

Corners, a tavern operated by Stanley Houle. Here, passengers “piled out” and took on “refreshment”. As to just what it was, people can use their own imaginations. Of this, Mr. Fox says, “It was sold at 5 cents a glass and certainly it was not 4.4 beer”.

From there to Eureka post office. Here, a mail change took place. Then, on to Leslie’s Corners to a tavern run by Felix Morand. Five minutes more for refreshments.



Stage coach Drivers: William Fox & Gordon Wigle

The trips were rather rough and tiresome, hence the need for refreshments.

From there the road - such as it was - led on to Harrow, where the mail was changed and exchanged once more. "Colchester and Oxley next stops!". Trains were the chief rivals of the stages, and they of them. There were no automobiles or trucks competing with the railways then, but according to this pioneer reinsman, "people seemed to want to ride the stage coach in preference to the steam road".

Oxley was the end of the lake shore run, and it was also the stopping place for the driver overnight. The round trip was made in 3 hours, 36 minutes each way. Schedules were kept to the minute, and "5 minutes for refreshments" did not mean a second longer than that.

Mr. Fox covered that route, back and forth for one year, without missing a trip. Being a newcomer to the profession, that year had much to do with his choice of life's work.

There are several amusing little incidents, tending to show human nature in all its sidelines, that helped him make up his mind that he could see as much of life from atop a coach as anywhere else. He relates, "On one occasion coming into Amherstburg with 11 passengers, a front wheel of the coach came off and upset us in the road, breaking a little brown half-gallon jug belonging to an old Irish woman and causing me to receive an awful bawling out.

I had to replace it at a cost of 25 cents. No other damage was done to equipment or passengers. Going back about 3 blocks, I found the nut that belonged on the wheel, and went on my way in 15 minutes." Mr. Fox did not laugh at that happening - not for several years, anyway.

Soon afterwards though, something happened that caused him to chuckle aloud. As he tells it, "A distinguished looking gentleman with a stove pipe hat boarded the coach. Mr. Fox trotted his horses right along, for his schedule had to be maintained.

The coach struck a "pitch hole" in the road. The unfortunate passenger's head struck the roof, and when the driver looked around to see whether or not he was still coming, he saw that the hat had been pushed down, completely covering the man's face. As can well be understood, the "dandy" was none too pleased. "Please warn me when you come to the next pitch hole!" he exclaimed.



Early newspaper article on Essex County stagecoach drivers.

Part two of this story will follow in the February newsletter... and things get more dangerous on the route!

HEIRS Resource Centre

Open Sept. - June (Dec. excepted)

Tuesday & Thursday: 10AM - 3PM

Wednesday & other appts: Call to confirm.

Newsletter

Published 9 times per year, in conjunction with General Meetings held on the 4th Thursday of the month, from September to June, (Dec. excepted). **Receive full colour newsletters by email, or a B&W printed version by regular post. Simply provide your email or street address to our office.**

Memberships

\$25 CDN/US per person or couple:

Currently May 2017 to April 2018

Send cheque to:

HEIRS PO Box 53, Harrow ON Canada N0R 1G0

Please include phone, fax, email, website and the family names you are now researching.

Non-member user fee at HEIRS Research Library:
\$5 per visit (+ photocopy costs).

Kudos... to Greg Harrison at The Computer Centre in Harrow, who provides HEIRS ongoing support for all things technical to help keep our office running smoothly.

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